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## AN EXHIBIT IN ANSWER TO THE HIGH-SCHOOL BOY'S QUESTION: "WHAT'S THE USE OF LATIN?"

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An abstract statement never convinces; concrete illustrations often do. One of the greatest crimes against pedagogy of which the average classical teacher is guilty is that of replying to the oft-repeated question, "What's the use of Latin?" by saying: "It's good for the mind," or "It helps one in English," or "It makes French easier," etc. On the other hand a few simple illustrations in graphic form showing just how it is, for example, that the Romance languages may be learned in half the time with Latin as a basis will hold the attention of the boy and perhaps convince him of the truth of the abstract statement. It is with this well-known principle of pedagogy in mind that the Latin Department of the Oak Park High School has recently prepared an Exhibit which illustrates in a concrete form the various ways in which Latin is of real use to the practical man of today.

The material, consisting of wall maps, charts, photographs, newspaper clippings, advertisements, etc., covering a very wide range of illustrative matter, is classified and arranged on the walls of two large rooms. Exclusive of certain introductory matters regarding education in general and the various meanings of the word "practical"—that ambiguous term which has confined Latin and Greek for the average person to that mysterious and (for him) useless realm of "culture"—the Exhibit falls under the following outline:

### THE RELATION OF GREEK AND LATIN TO PRACTICAL LIFE

- I. Greek and Latin make the English language more intelligible.
- II. Greek and Latin are of supreme value to the literary mastery of English.

- III. Latin is the foundation of the Romance languages.
- IV. Greek and Latin afford superior mental training.
- V. Greek and Latin are essential to an intimate acquaintance with art and decorative designs in general.
- VI. Greek and Latin explain much of our modern architecture.
- VII. Greek and Latin form the terminology of science.
- VIII. Greek and Latin contribute more or less directly to success in the professions.
- IX. Greek and Latin add vitality to textbooks of Greek and Roman history, and give a deeper insight into the two great civilizations upon which our own is based.
- X. Greek and Latin make many things in the world about us more interesting.

As many graphic devices as possible have been used in illustrating the above, the emphasis in all cases being directed to the practical side. Whenever possible the illustration has been based on the student's personal experience or connected in some way with his world. And in this alone lies the effectiveness of the Exhibit. The following detailed illustrations in connection with I and III will perhaps make clear the method which has been used throughout.<sup>1</sup>

#### I. Latin makes the English language more intelligible.

<p>Latin is the key to such unusual words as these: a "veridical" story Latin: <i>verus</i> = true <i>dicere</i> = to say.</p>	<p>Latin makes words mean more: "carbuncle" Latin: <i>carbo</i> = a live coal.</p>	<p>Specimens of English prose with the Latin element underlined in red. English is very largely indebted to Latin. [Eight samples of English from books, papers etc., pasted and underlined.]</p>
<p>Pictorial derivations of certain English words: "Cereal" (picture of Ceres) "iridescent" (picture of Iris).</p>	<p>Why not learn the root word and save time? [Drawing of a tree, whose branches are labeled with the English derivatives of <i>video</i> which is written at the bottom of the tree.]</p>	<p>Our English Dictionary. [An open book with <math>\frac{1}{4}</math> of each page colored red to indicate the percentage of words of classical origin.]</p>

<sup>1</sup> Sheets of gray or white bristol board have been used in most cases. The printing is large and conspicuous, and has been done by the aid of rubber stamps.

## III. Latin makes it easier to learn Italian, French, and Spanish.

<p>Latin has never been a "dead" language.</p> <p>[A map of the Roman Empire showing the extent of popular Latin at one time. It is now called English, French, Italian, and Spanish.]</p>	<p>This Italian newspaper shows how much Latin there is in the Italian language.</p> <p>[A recent Italian paper with the words of Latin origin underlined in green.]</p>	<p>This French newspaper shows the extent to which French is indebted to Latin.</p> <p>[A recent French paper with the words of Latin origin underlined in red.]</p>
<p>A Latin student can read these Spanish advertisements.</p> <p>[Advertisements from a Spanish newspaper with Latin vocabulary attached.]</p>	<p>The black in these circles indicates the percentage of words a Latin student does not need to look up.</p> <p>[Circles giving the percentage of Latin in English, Italian, French, and Spanish.]</p>	<p>Latin Syntax in Italian.</p> <p>Dative with <i>placet</i>: Latin: <i>mihi placet</i> Italian: <i>mi piace</i></p>

The results of the Exhibit have more than justified the immense labor involved in its making. While it has probably not made any student like Latin who disliked it before, since, as Whitman well knew, "Sermons and logic never convince," it has had the desired effect of making the thoughtless boy or girl pause before saying, "Latin is all foolishness; it doesn't do you any good." He is very likely to say, on the other hand, if he has any claim to reasonableness, that he has never realized before how large a part Latin played in his world. The following quotation from a recent Freshman test paper on the subject is characteristic of the situation with many pupils:

I used to think that Latin didn't help you any, but I have changed.